

**Justice Reinvestment II**  
**FY 2024 Budget Request - Community Justice Centers**  
**House Judiciary Committee - March 21, 2023**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Rachel Jolly. I am the Director of the Burlington Community Justice Center. I am testifying on behalf of the 17 Community Justice Centers in Vermont to address the Justice Reinvestment II funding for FY 2024. The CJsCs support the goals set forth in Justice Reinvestment I - to build a smarter justice system that reduces our reliance on incarceration. CJsCs and restorative justice play an important role in justice reform. CJsCs are a community-based resource, exactly like those that JRI is designed to support.

**FY 2023**

In FY 2023, the Community Justice Centers received the following Justice Reinvestment appropriations as a result of out-of-bed savings in the Department of Corrections budget:

- FY 2023 Budget - \$317,030
  - Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) -- \$204,450 – note that this was long overdue – prior to FY23, CJsCs had never had a COLA adjustment in their DOC contracts
  - Orange and Addison County CJC Parity -- \$20,000
  - Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training - \$85,000
- FY 2023 Budget Adjustment - \$342,247
  - We believe the legislative intent is to distribute equal grants to the 17 CJsCs.

**FY 2024**

*Base Funds*

In order to ensure that the JR II appropriations will continue as base investments in FY 2024, we suggest similar policy language as that in the FY 2023 budget - “Any funds expended on community-based service programs... shall be included in the subsequent year Department of Corrections budget for the same purpose at the same amount.”

*Carry forward - \$1,000,000*

The Legislature carried forward the remaining \$1,000,000 in JR II funding from the FY 2023 budget to the FY 2024 budget. The CJsCs are requesting the following:

- \$300,000 to Community Justice Centers - CJsCs have been asked to take on more and more work as justice reform efforts have progressed, and this funding will allow us to better serve our communities.
  - \$95,640 for a continuing 3% COLA increase for FY 2024 – this is needed to maintain staffing levels
  - \$204,360 in grants to be distributed equally to the 17 Community Justice Centers
- \$400,000 to support re-entry services for incarcerated women as provided by the Lund, Mercy Connections, Vermont Works for Women, and the DIVAS program.
- \$300,000 to Serenity House for offender re-entry/substance use services – there is a great need for substance use services as individuals transition back into the community.